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Worldwide Report

LAW OF THE SEA

No. 150



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CONTENTS

ASIA

INTER-ASIAN AFFAIRS

- Burmese Intrusion in Indian Waters Reported
(THE HINDU, 19 Mar 81) 1

INDIA

- Major Expansion Plans for Bombay High Reported
(THE TIMES OF INDIA, 15 Mar 81) 2
- Steps To Undertake Seabed Exploitation Outlined
(THE HINDU, 17 Mar 81) 4

THAILAND

- Committee Established To Aid Fishermen Arrested Abroad
(DAO SIAM, 27 Feb 81, TAWAN SIAM, 28 Feb 81) 6
- Many Held in Burma
Editorial Comments

LATIN AMERICA

BERMUDA

- Fishermen Challenge Ocean Research by Canadian Ship
(THE ROYAL GAZETTE, 4, 7 Mar 81) 9
- Fear of Explosions
Survey Cancellation

GUYANA

Briefs

Warning to Fishermen

11

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Briefs

Fishing Zone Announced

12

BURMESE INTRUSION IN INDIAN WATERS REPORTED

Madras THE HINDU in English 19 Mar 81 p 1

[Text]

From Our Correspondent

PORT BLAIR, March 18.

Two Burmese warships recently sent some men in speed boats to tell security men on duty on a nearby island in the Andamans that it "belonged" to Burma. However, no force was applied when the men refused to leave it when asked to do so.

It happened on March 8 when the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, speaking at Port of Middle Andaman asked the people of Andaman and Nicobar islands to remain vigilant against foreign

ships roaming in the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean.

The island concerned is only 80 nautical miles from Port Blair where Mrs. Gandhi was speaking in the late morning, while the incident took place in the early morning.

According to a late report the incident took place at 3 a.m. on March 8 at Andhar Narcondam island which is 140 nautical miles to the north of Port Blair.

Narcondam island is uninhabited and only a dozen

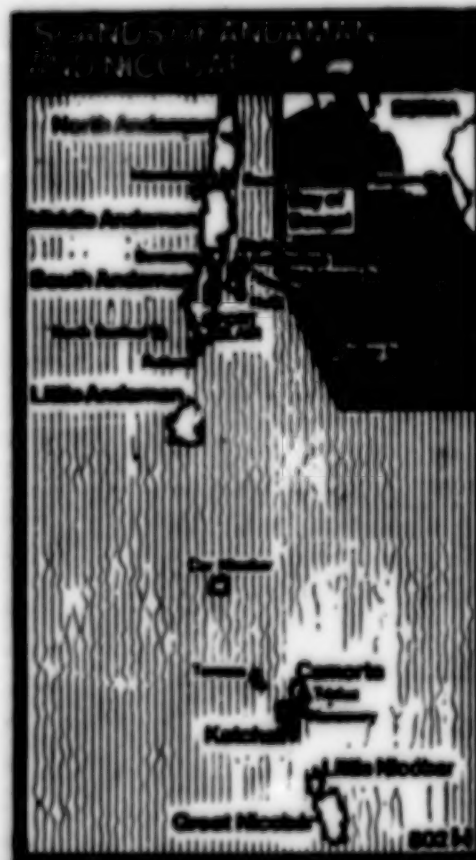
police men, two wireless operators and a compounder are on duty there. All on a sudden on March 8 the pre-dawn silence was disturbed by some announcements in Burmese. The men on duty became alert. When the day dawned they could see two warships from which two speed boats rushed toward the island.

The men at Narcondam sent a wireless signal for help. Ships of the Navy and aircraft rushed to the spot and chased the Burmese ships which reached Coco Island. This island which went to Burma after Independence is quite cloudy and it has been developed by Burma as a base.

Burma tried to claim possession of Narcondam by fixing marking stones on it in 1967 also.

THE HINDU had published a report on the incident.

After this only wireless operators and guards have been stationed on the island.



CSO: 5200

MAJOR EXPANSION PLANS FOR BOMBAY HIGH REPORTED

Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 15 Mar 81 p 6

[Text] Fifty-nine more platforms will be installed in the Bombay High region during the next three or four years, the general manager (operations), Oil and Natural Gas Commission, Mr H. S. Cheema, said here today.

Mr Cheema was speaking at the international diving symposium organised by ONGC and the Indian Navy.

He said that the commission had requested the Centre to sanction two more jack-up rigs and the matter was stated to be under the consideration of the authorities. "We are hoping to go in for a 12-rig programme," he said.

The general manager said that, at the moment, the ONGC had 34 divers and the number was likely to double during the middle of next year. The rise in the number of drilling rigs, off-shore platform and what are known as submarine pipes will necessitate the increase in the number of divers. "And new oil fields, when discovered, will be named after gems," he said.

Earlier, inaugurating the seminar Vice-Admiral M. P. Awaiti, flag officer, commanding-in-chief, Western Naval Command, said that the "eighties" had been aptly termed the "decade of the oceans," with underwater research and exploration as the key note of all future ocean activities.

According to the Vice-Admiral during the last decade offshore installations had come up in more than 30 countries, including small island-states like Trinidad and Taiwan. "I am informed that in each of these areas there is massive diving activity ranging from "shallow water bounce diving" to "long duration saturation diving" employing more than 5,000 commercial divers.

Missile Submarines

In a reference to underwater warfare, he said that some developed nations possessed ballistic missile submarines. "Attack submarines, fitted from stem to stern with hydrophones, seek these missile submarines out with the help of ships and planes," he said. He stressed that privacy under the sea was becoming difficult and with the development of different types of detection and kill systems, sub-sea forces would have neutralised each other by the turn of the century.

Referring to what is known as "saturation diving," he said that this system was common in most offshore fields. Saturation dives had been carried out to depths of more than 1,000 feet, and it would soon be possible to touch 2,000 feet.

The Vice-Admiral stated that a major difficulty faced by divers is what is known as "down time" due to rough seas and bad weather. "To overcome these problems submarines are going to be used with a separate 'diver lock out' system. They will be operated by 'saturated' divers who will be taken to work sites equipped with life support systems and work tools. "One such submarine will be shortly put into operation," he said. [as published]

He regretted that the commercial diving industry was still very much in its infancy in this country. "Young and unwary divers are exploited," he said. He was sorry that there was no effective legislation as yet to support the diver and there were also instances when contractors used sub-standard equipment. "More often than not, brute force is employed where special equipment is called for, he said.

He said that the copper mined on land would last us only another 40 years at the present rate of consumption, but there was a vast reserve of the same metal in the sea which could last us 500 years.

Prof. C. Karunakaran, director, Centre for Earth Science Studies also spoke. Commander G. A. Duke, chairman, technical committee, proposed a vote of thanks.

The two-day symposium will discuss a large number of topics, such as diver training, underwater communications with special reference to divers, and underwater work at the atomic power station.

CSO: 5200

STEPS TO UNDERTAKE SEABED EXPLOITATION OUTLINED

Madras THE HINDU in English 17 Mar 81 p 8

[Text] **T**HE news from the National Institute of Oceanography in Goa that its scientists have successfully hauled from the seabed polymetallic nodules, containing rich minerals like manganese should indeed be exciting.

Coming not long after the 1974 nuclear implosion at Pokhran and the 1978 launch of satellite 'Rohini', NIO's achievement has naturally been hailed as yet another demonstration of India's technological capability.

The significance of this event for the oceanographic studies notwithstanding, it will be, according to experts, too tall to claim from this that India has acquired the capability to exploit non-living resources in the ocean depths and has joined the exclusive club of half a dozen nations which have the technology to mine seabed resources.

Since its inception in 1966, NIO has been active in unravelling the mysteries of the sea, and the acquisition of the research vessel 'Ganeshini' has enhanced its research capabilities. NIO has taken this vessel on frequent cruises to probe the Indian Ocean in particular. Till recently the mission was confined to collection of data and exploration of both living and non-living resources.

For the first time in one of its recent cruises, 'Ganeshini' was used for something more than mere survey — reaching a depth of 4,500 metres for the manganese nodules. The exercise proved successful and the 'grabbers' hauled a good collection of nodules and other materials.

According to experts, this exploit, however, be called a 'technological breakthrough'. This only showed that Indian scientists had acquired the know-how and perfected the technique of collecting the nodules from ocean depths. Already a commendable achievement.

The scientists chose for this experiment a site known to have deposits of manganese nodules and the completion of the operation to perfection would enable them to enter new pastures with confidence.

But, there are a number of steps ahead before they can claim technological capability for commercial exploitation of these nodules. After the preliminary surveys, detailed exploration has to be undertaken for assessment — structure by structure of the extent and other particulars about the deposits. Then, geo-technical studies before taking up commercial mining.

The harnessing of the ocean resources, therefore, calls for the creation of necessary infrastructure in a rational manner. The

urgency of this has been realised by the Government, particularly in the context of the interest shown by the developed nations in upsticking mining of these nodules on a commercial basis.

To ensure that India did not lag behind the Government had initiated action through the Ocean Science and Technology Agency (OSTA), to step up technological capacity. OSTA has placed orders for the import of an oceanographic research vessel, which will be more versatile than 'Ganeshini' and a geo-technical ship. A hyperbolic research centre is also proposed.

These will beef up the capability to undertake exploration and other studies of the seabed resources. But still for the exploitation, foreign collaboration may be necessary. Among the countries which have the technology to mine the seabed resources West Germany and the Soviet Union are reported to have sounded the Government on a joint programme for mining in areas nearer the Indian coast.

The Indian Ocean has attracted all the major seabed mining nations, because it is known to have sizable deposits of manganese nodules even though the richest deposits are in Central East Pacific. The discovery of manganese nodules in Indian Ocean dates back to 1920 and the International Indian Ocean Expedition in the 1950's confirmed this.

No precise quantitative assessment of the deposits in the Indian Ocean is available. But on a global basis, some estimates

have been worked out in the context of the U.N. Conference on the Law of Sea.

The volume of nodules that can be mined and processed by 1985 is estimated at 15 million tonnes, which will result in a production of 220,000 tonnes of nickel, 200,000 tonnes of copper, and 30,000 tonnes of other metals.

The gross earning that can be expected from an operation of one million tonnes of nodules a year have been estimated — some four years ago — at \$170 millions. Firms in developed countries have invested heavily in explorations and improving the mining and processing methods, in preparation for commercial mining operations.

The exploitation of seabed minerals will have repercussions on land-based mineral industry. An UNCTAD study has estimated that the developing countries earnings from export of minerals will be hit when seabed nodules become the most important source of valuable metals like copper.

B. S. Padmanabhan

CSO: 5200

THAILAND

COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED TO AID FISHERMEN ARRESTED ABROAD

Many Held In Burma

Bangkok DAO SIAM in Thai 27 Feb 81 pp 3, 10

[Article: "In the Past 8 Years, Burma Has Seized 120 Boats and More Than 1,000 Crewmen Have Been Imprisoned"]

[Text] The cabinet has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives to establish an international fishing committee composed of representatives from the government sectors concerned and the fishing associations. Its duties will include setting policies concerning fishing and fishing negotiations with foreign countries, exchanging protection measures and measures to solve the problem of Thai fishing boats being seized by foreign countries, stipulating measures for carrying on fishing operations in foreign countries and holding discussions on the sale of Thai fishing boats to countries that need them.

This resulted from the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives making a proposal in accord with the reports received from the Fishing Department. The reports stated that since the time that neighboring countries expanded their special economic zones, during the past 3 years, 116 Thai fishing boats valued at approximately 400 million baht have been seized. During the past 8 years, Burma alone has seized 120 Thai fishing boats valued at approximately 420 million baht that violated [Burmese] territorial waters. Approximately 1,100 crewmen have been imprisoned, each serving at least 2 years in prison. Approximately 800 have been freed while approximately 300 others are still in prison. This does not include those killed while they were being captured. They may have been shot or killed while trying to flee by swimming away. Burma has apparently not returned any of the fishing boats to Thailand. Besides this, it appears that some of the Thai fishing boats have secretly transported war materials to the enemy in exchange for fishing rights in their territorial waters. If this is allowed to continue, this will lead to a loss of wealth and a loss of security for the country.

Editorial Comments

Bangkok TAWAN SIAM in Thai 28 Feb 81 p 3

[Editorial: "Thai Fishing Boats Have Been Seized"]

[Text] The cabinet has held a conference and passed a resolution approving the proposal of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives concerning the establishment of an international fishing committee composed of representatives from the government sectors concerned and the fishing associations. Its duties will include setting policies concerning fishing and fishing negotiations with foreign countries and solving the problem of Thai fishing boats being seized by foreign countries.

The reason that the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives proposed establishing this committee is that it received a report from the Fishing Department stating that, since the time that neighboring countries expanded their special economic zones, 116 Thai fishing boats valued at approximately 400 million baht have been seized. During the past 8 years, Burma alone has seized 120 Thai fishing boats valued at 420 million baht that violated [Burmese] territorial waters. Approximately 1,100 crewmen have been imprisoned and Burma has never returned any of the fishing boats to Thailand. Besides this, it appears that some fishing boats have secretly transported war materials to the enemy in exchange for fishing rights in their territorial waters.

The problem of Thai fishing boats being seized by foreign countries is in fact a chronic and long-standing problem. Before the announcement of special economic zones and in particular during the time when Thailand still maintained a 12-mile limit as its territorial waters, it can be said that outside these waters were international waters. Thus, it should not be said that [fishermen] continually entered and fished in the territorial waters of foreign countries. The truth that must be accepted is that the officials of some neighboring countries have frequently used various means to seize Thai fishing boats in international waters like pirates and used weapons to force the boats into their territorial waters in order to accuse them of serious charges. But when Thailand has sent warships to protect Thai fishing boats from being seized in this way, such incidents have declined.

Even though the Ministry of Agriculture has only just now started to take action in the matter of Thai fishing boats being seized by foreign countries, this is better than taking no action at all. But [one of] the problems that we feel should be discussed and quickly solved is holding negotiations in order to quickly reach a fishing

agreement with some neighboring countries so that the fishermen have fishing grounds. We should also send warships to patrol Thailand's territorial waters in order to prevent foreign warships from violating or entering [our waters] and easily seizing Thai fishing boats and, at the same time, to keep Thai fishing boats from secretly transporting goods in and out.

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CSO: 5200

FISHERMEN CHALLENGE OCEAN RESEARCH BY CANADIAN SHIP

Fear of Explosions

Hamilton THE ROYAL GAZETTE in English 4 Mar 81 pp 1, 3

[Text] Local fishermen are challenging the right of a Canadian research ship to take core samples from the ocean floor at Challenger and Argus Banks this weekend.

The fishermen believe work by the ship C.S.S. Hudson involves the uses of explosives, which would damage the environment and affect their livelihood.

Protesters include Messrs. John "Sean" Ingham, Hugh Petty, Albert Soares, Kevin Ingham, Allan Bean, Allan Card and William McCallan. Mr. Card and Mr. McCallan are on the Fisheries Advisory Board.

And according to Mr. "Sean" Ingham, the group catches 80 percent of the fish landed in Bermuda.

"Ninety-nine percent of our work is done on the banks," Mr. Ingham said, adding that the fishing industry was Bermuda's third largest, coming after tourism and the exempted company business.

The group was angered that they were notified by Mr. Norbert Simmons, Fisheries Assistant, about the ship's pending arrival on Monday, giving them just five days to clear fishing gear from the Banks.

"That ship came here to do a geophysical survey of St. George's," said Mr. Ingham. "Before it left, somebody in Government had to know well in advance that it was coming back."

Added Mr. Petty: "If anything goes wrong with the experiment, the fisherman are going to get blamed for it." [as published]

Fishermen were third-class citizens, said Mr. Ingham, adding: "When the environment is ruined, we are not going to take the blame for Government's stupidity, incompetence and recklessness."

They took issue with the Government's explanation that it had no control over foreign vessels outside the three-mile limit except in the case of fishing rights, for which Bermuda had control up to 200-miles off the island.

The Hon. Ralph Marshall, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, said last night that the work was being done by the Canadian government.

He said he was not aware that explosives would be used, but felt that the research would not harm the environment.

"We have no jurisdiction three miles off Bermuda except in fishing," Mr. Marshall said. "The Canadian Government has been co-operative."

Mr. Marshall admitted that he had known about the arrival of the ship for some time and agreed that fishermen should have been notified earlier.

He promised to look into their request for six observers to be put aboard the research ship.

Survey Cancellation

Hamilton THE ROYAL GAZETTE in English 7 Mar 81 p 3

[Text]

The controversial Canadian research ship the C.S.S. Hudson has cancelled plans to survey Challenger and Argus Banks this weekend.

But the Hon. Ralph Marshall, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, said protests by local fishermen concerned about the impact of the ship on their livelihoods had no bearing whatsoever on the cancellation.

Instead, bad weather had caused a serious delay in its schedule.

Announcing this in the House of Assembly yesterday, Mr. Marshall went on to attack fisherman Mr. John "Sean" Ingham, who earlier accused Government of trying to silence fishermen's protests over the ship carrying out work on the banks.

Mr. Marshall, who did not call Mr. Ingham's name, said: "I would like to stress that the loud, misleading and irresponsible utterances of one local fisherman played no part in the decision to bypass Bermuda."

Director of Fisheries Dr. James Burnett-Herkes told The Royal Gazette this week that the ship's intention was simply to obtain a profile of the rock and sand layers on the Banks.

It was extremely unlikely that any fish would be killed.

Fish would only be killed if they were within one foot of an air gun used to create seismic shock waves and towed 100 feet behind the vessel. It was unlikely any fish would be near the gun since it was being towed only five feet from the surface and not from the bottom as earlier reported.

Mr. Marshall said yesterday that the ship was oper-

ated by the Bedford Institute of Oceanography in Nova Scotia.

The Departments of Marine and Air Services were made aware of the ship's plans in December 1980. Permission was requested for the vessel to carry out research on the geology of the Bermuda Platform. There were no objections.

It was brought to the attention of the Canadian authorities that there was fishing gear set around Bermuda, including on Challenger and Argus Banks. If it was damaged or lost, local fishermen would expect to be compensated.

BRIEFS

WARNING TO FISHERMEN—Georgetown, Guyana, Saturday, (CANA)—Guyana's Minister of Fisheries, Robert Williams, has warned unlicensed Guyanese fishermen to keep clear of the territorial waters of neighbouring Suriname. The local news agency said that the Minister's advice was given during talks with fishermen in the Eastern Corentyne area which borders Suriname. [as published] Several fishermen from the area have been arrested (and some jailed on conviction) by the Suriname authorities in recent months on charges of fishing illegally in that country's waters. Fishing vessels and fishing tackle have been seized by the Suriname authorities. Some of the men convicted on illegal fishing and entry charges have been jailed. To fish in Suriname waters, Guyanese fishermen are required to be licensed by the authorities in that country, but the locals have complained about difficulties in getting such licences renewed. An official of the Corentyne Fishermen's Cooperative, some of whose members have been among those detained in Suriname, suggested that the Government should hold negotiations with Suriname to try to resolve the problems. Mr. Williams assured the fishermen that the Government was pursuing the matter and discussions held so far would "go a far way in regularising the situation". [Text] [Bridgetown SUNDAY ADVOCATE-NEWS in English 15 Mar 81 p 3]

CSO: 5200

SOUTH AFRICA

BRIEFS

FISHING ZONE ANNOUNCED--The South African Department of Economic Affairs has announced in Windhoek that a 320-km fishing zone will come into effect along the South-West African coast from tomorrow. The new zone will not affect the agreement for 1981 with the 16 members of the International Commission for the Southeast Atlantic Fisheries. The introduction of the zone has become necessary because of the serious depletion of fish resources along the South-West African coast. [Text] [LD311647 Johannesburg International Service in English 1500 GMT 31 Mar 81]

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